



**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,  
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT**  
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

**Alert levels 3-4**

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# **COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions**

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**For MBIE Internal Use Only**

**Edition 3: 9 April 2020**

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MBIE 5514

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# Contents

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People and wellbeing



ICT



Working from home



## MBIE COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

### Alert levels 3-4

*Edition 3 - 9 April 2020*

*These FAQs relate to when MBIE is operating at alert levels 3-4 of the Covid-19 Alert System. For more information about the alert system and what it means, [visit the official covid19 website](#). MBIE is taking the threat of COVID-19 seriously and we all need to do everything we can to prevent the situation getting worse. It is essential that everyone follows the advice from the Government.*

MBIE is following the New Zealand government guidance on working, working from home, social gatherings and travel in line with these alert levels. Please check [covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz) for the latest information.

**The most up to date health information is on [covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz) and the [Ministry of Health website](#).**



### PEOPLE AND WELLBEING

*In this section:*

#### Looking after ourselves

1. I'm feeling stressed, who can I talk to?
2. I am hearing the term "bubble", what does it mean in the context of COVID-19 pandemic?
3. I have to look after my kids, the house is small and I can't work my normal hours – what do I do?
4. I need some IT equipment or workstation furniture to do my work – can I pop into the office to collect it?

#### Feeling sick or unwell

5. When should I seek medical advice? Or ask to be tested?
6. I've got serious symptoms and am having difficulty breathing?
7. I have COVID-19, what should I do?
8. A member of my team has confirmed they have COVID-19, what do I do?

#### New work arrangements

9. How long will this new arrangement be in place for?
10. I have been asked to join an essential working team or transfer between existing teams. What is the process?
11. My work has been classified as BAU. Am I expected to continue to work from home? And if so, what hours am I expected to work?
12. My work has been classified as Incident Response and I am expected to continue coming to work, what is MBIE doing to ensure the virus is not spread at work?
13. My work has been classified as Essential Services and I am expected to continue coming to work, what is MBIE doing to ensure the virus is not spread at work?



14. My work has not been classified as BAU and I am expected to continue coming to work, but I am over 70 years old or have an auto-immune or respiratory condition, what should I do?
15. My work has not been classified as BAU and I am expected to continue coming to work, but I live with someone who is over 70 years old or has an auto-immune or respiratory condition, what should I do?
16. My work has not been classified as BAU and I am expected to continue coming to work, but I am not comfortable coming into work, what should I do?

## Looking after ourselves

1. **Q: I'm feeling stressed, who can I talk to?**

**A:** If over the following days and weeks you feel you are not coping, it's important to seek help and professional support. Your family doctor is a good starting point. For support with grief, anxiety, distress or mental wellbeing, you can also contact EAP on 0800 327669 or through [www.eapservices.co.nz](http://www.eapservices.co.nz) – please note EAP are offering [telephone services only](#). Alternatively, call or text [1737 Need to talk?](#) This service is free, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and gives you the chance to talk things through with a trained counsellor.

2. **Q: I am hearing the term “bubble”, what does it mean in the context of COVID-19 pandemic?**

**A:** “Bubble” means the people who are in the same household or sharing the same physical space.

At MBIE, we identify two types of bubbles:

- “Home bubble” refers to the people you stayed in the same household with, your flatmates, parents, siblings, children, and/or partner when COVID-19 Alert Level 4 was activated on 25 Mar at 11.59pm. For people with shared custody of children, the “home bubble” may cover the houses the children move between, if this is necessary.
- “Work bubble” refers to essential employees working in the same work area i.e. the same pod or meeting rooms. People who are still having to travel into work will have been assigned into teams and it is these teams that represent your bubble. It is essential you only engage with your team and not with any others.

Staying within your bubble is critical to breaking the chain and stopping the spread of COVID-19. If everyone at MBIE maintains the discipline to remain within their bubbles, we will save lives and speed up the return to normal living.

3. **I have to look after my kids, the house is small and I can't work my normal hours – what do I do?**

**A:** MBIE fully understand that these aren't normal circumstances and we don't expect everyone to be as productive as they usually are. Do what you can, the best you can but we understand that there are times when you may not do your usual full day or produce as much as you would usually expect.



4. ***I need some IT equipment or workstation furniture to do my work – can I pop into the office to collect it?***

**A:** No, this would pose significant risks around travel and breach the bubbles of anyone already working in that office. This is a temporary situation and we are asking people to be patient and work with what they have and to manage their health and safety through frequent breaks and exercise.

We know that you may not be able to be as productive as usual and accept this. We ask that you also recognise this and be kind to yourself. If your operational need or health and safety need is significant and you cannot manage without, please discuss this with your people leader, who will log a request with [MBIE.Operations@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:MBIE.Operations@mbie.govt.nz) for consideration.

### Feeling sick or unwell

5. ***Q. When should I seek medical advice? Or ask to be tested?***

**A:** If you feel unwell, particularly if you develop the symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, difficulty breathing), you should phone Healthline as soon as possible on [0800 358 5453](tel:08003585453) (or [+64 9 358 5453](tel:+6493585453) for international SIMs) or your doctor to get advice whether and where to be tested for COVID-19. ***Always phone first before going to see your doctor.***

6. ***Q: I've got serious symptoms and am having difficulty breathing?***

**A:** Always treat a situation such as this seriously, as breathing difficulties could be a sign of pneumonia:

- Call [111](tel:111) and ask for an ambulance and tell the operator what your symptoms are
- Be sure to tell the ambulance officers so that they are aware that you may have a COVID-19 infection.

7. ***Q. I have COVID-19, what should I do?***

**A:** Follow the instructions provided by the health professional when informed of the positive test, including increasing any physical distancing from people in your bubble and increasing your hygiene measures.

Please contact your People Leader as soon as possible, who will inform the MBIE COVID-19 IMT. Confidentiality will be maintained as far as practical. Contact the Wellbeing, Health and Safety team [safetyandwellbeing@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:safetyandwellbeing@mbie.govt.nz) for any Wellbeing Support and don't forget to access EAP or 1737 if you would like to talk with a non-MBIE person.

8. ***Q. A member of my team has confirmed they have COVID-19, what do I do?***

**A:** Please immediately inform the MBIE-IMT through email [MBIE.WelfareSafety@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:MBIE.WelfareSafety@mbie.govt.nz), including the following details about the individual:



- Name, team, branch, group
- normal work contact group
- when last at work
- any support needs in self-isolation
- Determine if there are any other immediate support needs (e.g. family notification, food etc.) and give a reminder of the availability of organisations like EAP and 1737.
- Establish if the individual has been in an MBIE building in the last 72 hours and if so, where in the building the person spent time e.g. seat location, meeting rooms and last people interacted (note whether they were undertaking Activity Based Working or had a set seating arrangement).
- Inform immediate team members about the situation and advise them:
  - to heighten self-isolation for 14 days, especially increasing separation from people in their bubbles, and
  - to seek advice from Healthline about the need for testing.
- Contact the Wellbeing, Health and Safety team if you would like any immediate advice – by telephone or email: contact the Head of WHS, Lance Goodall on 0212993979, or by using [safetyandwellbeing@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:safetyandwellbeing@mbie.govt.nz) or [\\*MBIECOVID19IMTResponseTeam@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:*MBIECOVID19IMTResponseTeam@mbie.govt.nz). If practical, log an event report on Zambion.

### **New work arrangements**

**9. Q: How long will this new arrangement be in place for?**

**A:** Until further notice. We will follow Government advice and guidelines and keep everyone updated.

**10. Q. I have been asked to join an essential working team or transfer between existing teams. What is the process?**

**A.** Joining an essential working team, or moving between teams, carries a high risk to health as it breaches existing bubbles. The MBIE IMT has agreed the following process is to be followed:

- The person is not to be a vulnerable person who should remain in isolation.
- The relevant people leader must consult with the person to ensure they are willing, and can work the roster proposed on an enduring basis (i.e. 4 days on, 4 days off).
- Their workspace, including desk and chair, must be cleaned with cleaning spray and paper towels before commencement and at the end of each 4-day roster.
- The new team member is to be informed of requirements related to physical/social distancing, hygiene requirements of the worksite, and any personal protective equipment requirements prior to coming onsite.
- If a team member is already working at an essential work / response location and is to change rosters, they must have no symptoms of COVID19 and must remain off-site for 14 days before commencing on their new roster. (i.e. they cannot immediately go from one roster to the next).



**11. Q: My work has been classified as BAU. Am I expected to continue to work from home? And if so, what hours am I expected to work?**

**A:** If you are able to work offline, you can do some work from home. If this is not possible, then no, you are not expected to work from home as our ICT systems cannot support this. During this time, all MBIE employees will be paid as usual. Please look after yourselves and your families and we will look forward to when we can all return to work

**12. Q: My work has been classified as Incident Response and I am expected to continue coming to work, what is MBIE doing to ensure the virus is not spread at work?**

**A:** Not everyone who is assigned to Incident Response will have to physically be in the office, so check whether you can work remotely. If you are required to work at an MBIE site, it is important that you practice physical distancing (minimum 2 metres) and practice good hygiene (using soap and water or the hand sanitiser provided). Incident management leads will be considering rostering and ensuring they understand who is attending each office and we are working with our normal cleaning companies to ensure that appropriate cleaning regimes are in place.

**13. My work has been classified as Essential Services and I am expected to continue coming to work, what is MBIE doing to ensure the virus is not spread at work?**

**A:** Only attend the office if it is essential you do so – most of our work can be undertaken through remote working. If you are required to work at an MBIE site, it is important that you practice physical distancing (minimum 2 metres) and practice good hygiene (using soap and water or the hand sanitiser provided). People Leaders will be using rosters to minimise staff contact. If additional systems or tools are needed, these will be provided on a cases by case basis. We are working with our normal cleaning companies to ensure that the appropriate cleaning regimes are in place.

**14. My work has been classified as Essential and I am expected to continue coming to work, but I am over 70 years old or have an auto-immune or respiratory condition, what should I do?**

**A:** If you are over 70, then you will not be expected to come to work. If you can work remotely, please do so. If you cannot work remotely, please do not come into work – you will continue to be paid as normal and we want you to look after yourself and return to work once COVID-19 is no longer an issue.

**15. My work has been classified as Essential and I am expected to continue coming to work, but I live with someone who is over 70 years old or has an auto-immune or respiratory condition, what should I do?**

**A:** If you can work remotely, please do so. If you are required to work at an MBIE site, it is important that you practice physical distancing (minimum 2 metres) and practice good hygiene (using soap and water or the hand sanitiser provided). People Leaders will be using rosters to minimise staff contact. If you have particular concerns, please discuss these with your people leader, who will consider special leave with pay – your family are important and we want you and them to be safe.



**16. My work has been classified as Essential and I am expected to continue coming to work, but I am not comfortable coming into work, what should I do?**

**A:** If all or most of your work can be done through remote working, please discuss this with your people leader, as this would be the preferred approach. If you are required to work at an MBIE site, it is important that you practice physical distancing (minimum 2 metres) and practice good hygiene (using soap and water or the hand sanitiser provided). People Leaders will also be using rosters to minimise staff contact and we are working with our cleaning companies to ensure that appropriate cleaning regimes are in place. If you still feel uncomfortable coming into work, discuss this with your people leader and consider taking annual leave, anticipated annual leave or special leave without pay – Your people leader will consider your concerns in good faith.



## ICT

*In this section:*

### Getting set up

17. How do I need to prepare to work remotely?
18. Will I be able to access all my applications from home?
19. Can I order a new phone, laptop, keyboard or other accessories?
20. Can I get calendar/email on my personal phone?
21. I don't have an MBIE laptop, how can I work from home?
22. Can I just email documents to my personal email to work on at home?

### Getting set up

**11. Q: How do I need to prepare to work remotely?**

- Before you take your laptop home, make sure that you have key accessories such as a power cable, headset, keyboard and mouse. There will be no sharing of accessories in or out of the office, so bring them back with you on your rostered office days.
- Check the connection instructions for your device. These instructions will cover all MBIE devices – it's a good idea to print these and take them with you.
- Before you go home download any documents that you know you will need to your desktop. Please note that you will need to manually upload these back to MAKO when you have a connection. Please visit the MAKO Help Te Taura page.
- Before you sign off the network, remember to unreserve any MAKO documents, update your password and set your reset security questions.
- Save the MBIE service desk phone number so if you need to you can call. Please note that call volumes are heavy and wait times can vary.

**12. Q: Will I be able to access all my applications from home?**





**A:** Some older applications may not function as expected. When you are required to work remotely and applications are not functioning properly, please save this work for when you are back in the office.

**13. Q: Can I order a new phone, laptop, keyboard or other accessories?**

**A:** Not at this time. ICT have already worked with DCE's to work out prioritisation for the deployment of any new equipment for the currently available stock. Talk to your people leader who will need to establish priority with their DCE.

**14. Q: Can I get calendar/email on my personal phone?**

**A:** No. Any existing BYOD devices will continue to work. New BYOD requests will be prioritised for incident team and essential services.

**15. Q: I don't have an MBIE laptop, how can I work from home?**

**A:** We must reserve the network space for the incident team and essential services. Please do not log into Citrix. We will be monitoring Citrix and remote access usage and provide further advice as required. Discuss your situation with your people leader and consider what work you can do that is not reliant on network access. And if you can't work from home, accept it and focus on keeping yourself and your family well.

**16. Q: Can I just email documents to my personal email to work on at home?**

**A:** No. This creates a security vulnerability and risk. If you have been required to work remotely, please use one of the remote working methods to access MAKO or your business system.



## WORKING FROM HOME

*In this section:*

### When to work from home

17. What should I do if the office has been closed and working from home isn't an option?
18. What should I take into consideration before working from home?

### Remuneration

19. I am a permanent employee, will I receive my normal pay if the office is shut down and everyone is working remotely?
20. I'm a contractor, will my contract be terminated?

### The home environment

21. What do I do if my children's school is shut because of COVID-19? Am I expected to work full time from home?



22. What can you recommend for ensuring health and safety when working from home? If children are home too, do you have any advice for keeping them safe and happy?

### When to work from home

23. **Q: What should I do if the office has been closed and working from home isn't an option?**

**A:** If your work is a critical service, then your people leader will have prepared a plan so you can carry on working. This might mean moving the work to an alternative site, introducing shift work or working from home. If you can't work from home and alternative work accommodation isn't available, you will be given special leave with pay.

24. **Q: What should I take into consideration before working from home?**

**A:** You need to be careful when working from home to ensure your own privacy and the confidentiality of the work you are doing is protected. To do this–

- Have password-protected work laptops and tablets - these are a much safer way to take work home than paper documents
- Be mindful of who might be able to read over their shoulder if you're working around others

Keep your work device with you if you're out and about, and do not store it in a place that has a high risk of theft (for example in full view in the back seat of a car). There is a module on [Learn@MBIE](#) called '[Working Remotely – Induction](#)' that covers information for both employees and managers with tips for working and managing remotely.

### Remuneration

25. **Q: I'm a permanent employee, will I receive my normal pay if the office is shut down and everyone is working remotely?**

**A:** MBIE will endeavour to pay everyone their base normal pay each fortnight. (Any additional transactions such as overtime may not be processed but these will be caught up at a later date and back paid accordingly)

26. **Q: I'm a contractor, will my contract be terminated?**

**A:** Discuss this with your people leader as it will depend on your contract terms and conditions and where work can be undertaken. If the work cannot be continued flexibly (e.g. at another office or at home) it is likely MBIE will need to provide at least two weeks' notice and then terminate the contract until the situation changes.

### The home environment

27. **Q: What do I do if my children's school is shut because of COVID-19? My work has been classified BAU, am I expected to work full time from home?**



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**A:** We understand that this may be difficult. Your children and families are important, so do what you can but don't worry about whether the hours you can work match to the letter of your contract.

**28. Q: *What can you recommend for ensuring health and safety when working from home? If children are home too, do you have any advice for keeping them safe and happy?***

**A:** When you're working from home, you should prioritise taking care of your own and your dependents' health and safety. Be aware of the risks around you and how to manage them. For example, take breaks to manage fatigue, and make sure your workspace is comfortable to work at and not going to be an issue. Keep in touch with your people leader and be honest with your employer about how you are feeling and any concerns you have. Follow [Ministry of Health guidance](#) about protecting yourself and others from infection. If you're looking for some additional information to support children, [The Ministry of Education](#) has advice.